



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

25 FEB 2021

On 27 January 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many people have been placed into fulltime work solely by work and income employees since 25 March 2020 - and are still there?*
2. *Of those in (1), how many were arranged from Wellington offices?*
3. *Of those in (2), how many were arranged through (a) Johnsonville Work and Income and, (b) Porirua Work and Income?*

On 27 January 2021, you also emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Act, the following information:

4. *How many work and income case managers have resigned from their roles as case managers since 25 March 2020?*
5. *How many of the case managers in question (4) were from Wellington offices?*
6. *How many case managers were first employed after 25 March 2020 and are still working as case managers?*
7. *How many case managers in question (6) are from the Wellington region?*
8. *How many people were trespassed from WINZ offices since 25 March 2020?*
9. *How many of the people in question (8) are from Wellington offices?*
10. *How many people have applied for accommodation supplement either as beneficiary or a non-beneficiary - and have included council encroachment fees, since 25 March 2020?*
11. *Since 1 January 2020, how many people have applied for review of decisions on their accommodation supplement?*
12. *How many RODs are pending a hearing as at 27 January 2021. Of those how many have been pending for more than 12 months since application?*

On 28 January 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

13. *How many people were hired as case managers, externally, between 26th March 2020 until 28 January 2021, broken down by region?*

Page 1 of 6

14. *For those in Wellington can you please break these numbers down into individual service centres?*

15. *Can you please advise how many case managers in each of these Wellington region centres have been employed as case managers for more than three years?*

For the sake of clarity, I have consolidated your three requests in this response and will answer each of your questions in turn.

1. *How many people have been placed into fulltime work solely by work and income employees since 25 March 2020 - and are still there?*

In response to question one, please see **Table One** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which outlines the total number of full-time work placements by Work and Income Service Centres between 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020, broken down by region.

Your request for the amount of people that are still in the full-time work they were placed in by Work and Income is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found. The Ministry does not continue to follow and record the employment status of someone once they have left the welfare system.

2. *Of those in (1), how many were arranged from Wellington offices?*

As seen in **Table One**, there were a total of 868 clients placed into full-time work through case management in the Wellington region, between 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020.

3. *Of those in (2), how many were arranged through (a) Johnsonville Work and Income and, (b) Porirua Work and Income?*

In response to question three, please see **Table Two** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which outlines the total number of full-time work placements, broken down by Johnsonville and Porirua Work and Income Service Centres between 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

4. *How many work and income case managers have resigned from their roles as case managers since 25 March 2020?*

5. *How many of the case managers in question (4) were from Wellington offices?*

The Ministry can confirm that, as at 1 February 2021, 111 Work and Income Case Managers have resigned from their role as Case Manager since 25 March 2020. Of these resignations, 12 were from the Wellington offices.

6. *How many case managers were first employed after 25 March 2020 and are still working as case managers?*
7. *How many case managers in question (6) are from the Wellington region?*

The Ministry can confirm that as at 1 February 2021 524 people had been hired for their role as a Case Manager since 25 March 2020 and are still working in that role. Of these hires, 31 were for Wellington offices.

8. *How many people were trespassed from WINZ offices since 25 March 2020?*
9. *How many of the people in question (8) are from Wellington offices?*

While the Ministry places a high priority on the safety of its staff and clients, it also assists some of the most vulnerable people in the community. It is important to balance the needs of clients with those of staff to provide a safe working environment.

The Ministry is committed to ensuring clients who have been trespassed from their service centres, continue to receive their correct entitlement to assistance. Once a trespass notice has been served, the client will be notified in writing and informed that they are no longer able to deal face-to-face with staff at the service centre or region they are trespassed from. They are advised that in order to prevent a breach of the trespass notice, they should appoint an agent to act on their behalf when dealing with the Ministry.

Where no agent is willing to act on the person's behalf, or the person is not willing to have an agent, contact will be made by telephone or email. The Ministry will work with the client to put in place alternative arrangements.

The Ministry does not capture the number of trespass notices on a daily basis, instead they are aggregated by month. As such, the Ministry can confirm that, between 1 March 2020 and 19 January 2021, 249 people were trespassed from Work and Income Service Centres, of which, 18 were trespassed from Wellington Service Centres.

Please note that these counts and dates relate to incidents that resulted in a trespass order. The date that the trespass is served will often be a day or more later than the incident, therefore, there may be some small variances between the month in which an incident was recorded, and the date the trespass was served.

10. *How many people have applied for accommodation supplement either as beneficiary or a non-beneficiary - and have included council encroachment fees, since 25 March 2020?*

If an encroachment fee is included in the Accommodation Supplement, it is recorded in our system under 'other', which includes various other accommodation costs. The Ministry cannot disaggregate the number of encroachment fees from other types of accommodation costs as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with the number of clients with an encroachment fee included in their Accommodation Supplement, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, if you would like to learn more about the home ownership costs in relation to Accommodation Supplement and Temporary Additional Support, please visit the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/temporary-additional-support/home-ownership-costs-01.html.

11. Since 1 January 2020, how many people have applied for review of decisions on their accommodation supplement?

12. How many RODs are pending a hearing as at 27 January 2021. Of those how many have been pending for more than 12 months since application?

The Ministry administers benefits and pension entitlements for more than one million people. The Benefits Review process is designed to ensure people have access to an independent review of benefit entitlement decisions.

Approximately five million decisions are made each year, which have a right of review. Of these, approximately 4,500 requests for a formal Review of Decision are made each year. This represents 0.01 per cent of the total number of decisions made.

The Benefits Review Committee is a review body that is established under the Social Security Act 1964. It enables people to ask for a review of a decision that has been made about an application for income support or a pension.

A Review of Decision is an application for the decision to be heard by the Benefits Review Committee.

There are three stages to the review and appeals process.

- **Stage 1: Internal review.**
When a client applies for a Review of Decision, the Ministry carries out an internal review to examine any new information, review the information from which the original decision was made and to verify that the decision made was in accordance with the appropriate legislation.
- **Stage 2: Benefits Review Committee.**
When the internal review outcome is not favourable or only favourable in part to the client, the decision must be heard before a Benefits Review Committee without any further request from the client.
- **Stage 3: Social Security Appeal Authority hearing.**
When the original decision is upheld (or partially upheld) by the Benefits Review Committee, the client can appeal to the Social Security Appeal Authority (SSAA). The SSAA is an independent judicial tribunal administered by the Ministry of Justice.

The Benefits Review Committee meet regularly and is comprised of three people who have had no involvement with the original decision. One will be a person from the community that the Minister for Social Development and Employment has appointed. The other two are usually experienced staff from the Ministry.

Further information regarding the appeals process can be found on the Ministry's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/your-rights-and-responsibilities/asking-for-a-review-of-decision.html.

Between 1 and 31 January 2021, there have been 539 applications made for a Review of Decision for their Accommodation Supplement.

As at 31 January 2021, there are 1,225 Review of Decisions that are pending a BRC hearing. Please note that on average, 70% of Review of Decisions are resolved before the BRC hearing stage, therefore not all of the 1,225 cases noted above will result in a hearing. Of these, 63 have been pending for 12 months or longer.

13. How many people were hired as case managers, externally, between 26th March 2020 until 28 January 2021, broken down by region?

In response to questions 13, please see **Table Three** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which outlines the total number of people that were externally hired as a Case Manager between 26 March 2020 and 28 January 2021, broken down by Work and Income region.

14. For those in Wellington can you please break these numbers down into individual service centres?

In response to questions 14, please see **Table Four** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which outlines the total number of people that were externally hired as a Case Manager between 26 March 2020 and 28 January 2021, broken down by Wellington Work and Income Service Centre.

15. Can you please advise how many case managers in each of these Wellington region centres have been employed as case managers for more than three years?

In response to questions 15, please see **Table Five** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which outlines the total number of Case Managers that have been employed for three years or more, broken down by Wellington Work and Income Service Centre, as at 28 January 2021.

Please note, the number of case managers with three or more years working as a case manager may not accurately reflect a person's length of service or experience. For example, a person who worked for 10 years at a contact centre before becoming a case manager two years ago would not show up in the list, though they will have 12 years' service and experience working with clients.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Work and Income Case Managers, Review of Decisions and trespass notices, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Read".

Kay Read
Group General Manager, Client Service Delivery
Service Delivery

Appendix A

Table One: The total number of full-time work placements by Work and Income Service Centres, between 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020, broken down by Work and Income region.

Work and Income Region	Number of placements
Auckland Metro	3,809
Bay of Plenty	1,838
Canterbury	959
Central	690
East Coast	1,740
Nelson	631
Northland	1,002
Southern	766
Taranaki	1,065
Waikato	1,367
Wellington	868
Unspecified	8
Total	14,743

Notes:

- This contains count of placements and not clients.
- Clients can be counted more than once if they have been placed into full time job at least twice in the period.
- Region is based on the Ministry Service Centre responsible for the client's case management.
- A client may not necessarily reside in the same area as their service centre.

Table Two: The total number of full-time work placements by Johnsonville and Work and Income Service Centres, between 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020, broken down by Johnsonville and Porirua Work and Income site.

Work and Income Site	Number of placements
Johnsonville	S
Porirua	171
Other	S
Total	868

Notes for table two:

- This contains count of placements and not clients.
- Clients can be counted more than once if they have been placed into full time job at least twice in the period.
- A client may not necessarily reside in the same area as their service centre.
- Other represents all Wellington sites not including Porirua or Johnsonville.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

Table Three: The total number of people that were externally hired as a Case Manager between 26 March 2020 and 28 January 2021, broken down by Work and Income region.

Work and Income Region	Number of Case Managers hired externally
Auckland Central	30
Auckland North	32
Auckland South	39
Bay of Plenty	52
Canterbury	56
Central	31
East Coast	71
Ellerslie	34
Nelson Marlborough West Coast	20
Northland	50
Southern	26
Taranaki Whanganui King Country	22
Waikato	35
Wellington	38
Centralised Services	52
Total	588

Notes:

- Centralised services are centralised Case Managers that provide support to particular regions and service centres where needed. The total consists of 18 Case Managers that were hired for the Hawke's Bay region and 34 that were hired for the Manawatu/Whanganui region.

Table Four: The total number of people that were externally hired as a Case Manager between 26 March 2020 and 28 January 2021, broken down by Wellington Work and Income Service Centre.

Wellington Work and Income Service Centre	Number of Case Managers hired externally
Newtown	6
Wellington	8
Porirua	14
Lower Hutt	6
Wainuiomata	1
Naenae	1
Other	2
Total	38

Notes:

- The category 'Other' refers to Case Managers who work across the Wellington region and are not based in one single Service Centre.

Table Five: The total number of Case Managers that have been employed for three years or more, broken down by Wellington Work and Income Service Centre, as at 28 January 2021.

Work and Income Service Centre	Case Managers employed for three years or more
Johnsonville	3
Lower Hutt	12
Naenae	9
Newtown	2
Porirua	16
Upper Hutt	7
Wainuiomata	5
Wellington	6
Other	15
Total	75

Notes:

- The category 'Other' refers to Case Managers who work across the Wellington region and are not based in one single Service Centre.